

P O E M S

WRITTEN BY A

BRITISH SAILOR,

WHEN CONFINED IN THE
PRISON OF QUIMPER,

IN FRANCE.

To which are added,

TWO SONNETS.

“How many bleed,
“By shameful variance betwixt Man and Man.
“How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms;
“Shut from the common air, and common use
“Of their own limbs.”

THOMSON.

GLASGOW:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following POEMS were written by a BRITISH SEAMAN, while in prison at QUIMPER, and were communicated to the EDITOR by a Friend, who had himself, been eighteen months a prisoner in France. The feelings alone, of the Reader, are appealed to for ascertaining their merit. But it is believed, that the POEMS of a BRITISH SAILOR, written within that prison which was the scene of so much distress to our captive countrymen, and in the midst of those miseries which so many have reason to deplore, will be esteemed curious and interesting. The EDITOR has just to add, that a very few alterations only have been made from the copy communicated to him, which probably became necessary, merely from the incorrectness of the transcript, taken in the confusion and inconvenience of a prison

LAMENTATION

IN THE

PRISON OF QUIMPER.

I.

AH! BRITAIN'S Guardian Genius, why
Thus leave thy sons so brave,
To drop neglected and unwept
Into the silent grave:
To pine amid disease and want,
On cruel GALIHA'S shore,
Till in Death's darkest night they fall,
They fall, to rise no more?

II.

Ah! see the sons of NEPTUNE, bold,
For valour long renown'd,
Lie helpless as the new born babe
Upon the cold hard ground:
Who, tho' they've fac'd the battle's rage,
And seas, and tempests wild,
Are doom'd, alas! at last to be
By cruel usage, foil'd.

III.

Oh! many a father's tender heart,
And many a mother's too,
And many a widow'd helpless wife,
Shall QUIMPER'S prison rue:

For many a youth, of promis'd bloom,
 And many a husband dear,
 Far, far, from BRITAIN's friendly shore,
 Died friendless victims here.

IV.

Three thousand men were in its walls,
 Once active, stout, and well,
 But ere three months were past and gone,
 Full fifteen hundred fell;
 Whilst, with dejected downcast eyes,
 Weak, languid, starv'd, and pale,
 The sad survivor's scarce had strength
 To tell the mournful tale.

V.

Whilst life's warm blood flows through my veins,
 And grief affords a tear,
 Still shall I weep those hapless scenes
 Which I have witness'd here.
 Whilst one idea lasts, and sense
 Of wrong, my heart can swell
 I'll ne'er forget that land in which
 My gallant comrades fell.

THE SCENE OF WOE.

I.

I TELL of QUIMPER's gloomy walls,
 In GALLIA's desolated land,
 Where many a BRITON's spirit calls
 For vengeance on the unfeeling band,

Where ENGLAND'S noblest, brightest pride,
 Was basely trampled by the foe:
 What eye but wept, what heart but sigh'd,
 To see so deep a scene of woe.

II.

There, many a youth who ev'ry clime
 Had rang'd, and battle's dangers prov'd,
 Droop'd, like the fresh rose in its prime
 Transplanted from the soil it lov'd,
 Unpitied pin'd, unpitied died,
 Unpitied doom'd to earth to go:—
 What eye but wept, what heart but sigh'd,
 To see so deep a scene of woe.

III.

There, void of honour's sacred tie,
 Or of the feeling heart's reproach,
 They view'd, unmov'd, the victims die;
 Unmov'd, beheld their pangs approach,
 Unmov'd, beheld them slide by slide
 Expos'd to the rude blasts that blow:
 What eye but wept, what heart but sigh'd,
 To see so deep a scene of woe.

IV.

There, long the pale surviving few,
 The saddest garb of sorrow wore,
 Whilst round them noxious vapours flew,
 And cold and hunger pierc'd them sore.
 The calls of nature unsupply'd,
 To dogs and carrion forc'd to go:
 What eye but wept, what heart but sigh'd,
 To see so deep a scene of woe.

THE CARTEL.

Tune—*Mary's Dream.*

I.

LONG had the victims pale, of war,
 With struggles hard, keen hunger born,
 And many a gallant BRITISH TAR
 Had been from life's bright precincts torn,
 When came the long expected day,
 On which, whilst round the tidings flee,
 Divine BRITANNIA seem'd to say,
 "My sons shall weep no more for me."

II.

The meagre, pallid cheek of woe,
 Mark'd with the traces of despair,
 Receives once more HEALTH's rosy glow,
 And happiness sits smiling there:—
 Whilst, oh! how sweet, he hopes to hear
 Full soon, from pain, from sorrow free,
 The part'ner of his bosom dear,
 Say, "How I've wept and mourn'd for thee."

III.

When to his longing eyes appears
 The chalky cliffs of BRITAIN's shore,
 Ah! how his trembling bosom fears
 To find his love is true no more;
 But how he'll bless the happy day,
 When, in his arms, from danger free,
 He hears her, fraught with transport, say,
 "Ah! how I've wept and mourn'd for thee."

IV.

No more his mean, dishonour'd foes
 Shall share him out his portion scant,
 No more shall rob him of repose
 With insults keen, and pining want:
 Heed not the frequent briny tear
 Thou'lt shed, my Friend, mayhap thou'lt see
 These savage foes within thy pow'r,—
 No—"never may they weep like thee."

V.

Oft, as the jovial bowl goes round,
 Amid the sweets of festive cheer,
 Sad, shalt thou tell of those who fell,
 And spare their pensive shades a tear:
 Which, hov'ring, still o'er the lov'd clime,
 Must mourn their fate was ere to be
 Murder'd on GALLIA's savage shore,
 O BRITAIN! in *captivity*.

 S O N N E T.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF THE NIGHTINGALE.

SWEET poet of the woods—a long adieu!
 Farewel, soft minstrel of the early year!
 Ah! 'twill be long ere thou shalt sing anew,
 And pour thy music on 'the night's dull ear.'

Whether on Spring thy wandering flights await,
 Or whether silent in our groves you dwell,
 The pensive muse shall own thee for her mate,
 And still protect the song, she loves so well.
 With cautious step, the love-lorn youth shall glide
 Thro' the lone brake that shades thy mossy nest;
 And shepherd girls, from eyes profane shall hide
 The gentle bird, who sings of pity best:
 For still thy voice shall soft affections move,
 And still be dear to sorrow, and to love!

SONNET.

TO SPRING.

AGAIN the wood, and long-withdrawing vale,
 In many a tint of tender green are drest,
 Where the young leaves unfolding, scarce conceal
 Beneath their early shade, the half-form'd nest
 Of finch or wood-lark; and the primrose pale,
 And lavish cowslip, wildly scatter'd round,
 Give their sweet spirits to the sighing gale.
 Ah! season of delight!—could aught be found
 To soothe awhile the tortur'd bosom's pain,
 Of Sorrows rankling shaft to cure the wound,
 And bring life's first delusions once again,
 'Twere surely meet in thee!—thy prospect fair,
 Thy sounds of harmony, thy balmy air,
 Have power to cure all sadness—but despair.

FINIS.